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THE MISSING-WORD CRAZE.

A Diabolical Invention on Which a Prohibitive Tariff Should Be Placed.

New York Sun.

The magnitude of the "missing-word" craze, which is grievously afflicting all England and the remotest parts of the British isles, is astounding. It has devastated the money-order branch of the government and spread desolation through the whole postoffice service. The memory of the spelling-bee fantasy has faded away in comparison. The visible results of the craze have been such that it has become a public nuisance, and the public prosecutor is engaged in an effort to suppress it.

The missing word craze game, or whatever it may be called, is this: A sentence is printed every week from which the last word is omitted, as "Bill Smith is a ——," and the public is invited to write upon a coupon printed in the paper what they think the missing word is, and to send in their address with a money order for a shilling. The aggregate shillings so sent in are divided among the guessers who strike the correct word. It was invented by the proprietor of a nondescript publication which is but two years old. The idea has sent up the circulation of the paper to over half a million a week, 200,000 copies a week being credited to the missing word idea in the past two months. Other publications adopted the device, and a month ago the craze swept over the unhappy land like a blizzard. Two weeks ago the paper first mentioned received and distributed over $35,000 received in shillings for guesses. One week there were but forty-three correct guesses, and each of the lucky guessers received $350 in return for his shilling. It was estimated a week ago that some $180,000 in shillings was sent to the various papers running the scheme. The money orders at many postoffices have all been used up, the reserve supply is low, the mails are clogged, and the end is yet afar off. Clubs and syndicates are formed, pooling guesses and prizes. Some individuals send in a score or two of guesses and shillings. The craze has invaded the church fairs, the clubs and even the exchanges and business houses.

The business has added a new department, employing over two hundred people, to the paper which originated the scheme. An immense cupboard, filling the space of a doorway, is the letter-box. A stream of bundles of letters pour into it all day long, and on the day the competitions close the mail comes from the postoffice in a procession of cabs. A hundred and fifty girls are employed in the sorting-room of the paper. They are all provided by the Young Women's Christian Association, and receive the excellent pay of 30 shillings a week. Every day, from 9 to 5, these girls do nothing but open letters and sort out money orders and guesses. The guess coupons go to another room, and here a dozen young women are doing a most remarkable thing. Each one is intrusted for a whole day ahead of the rest of the world with the secrets of the "missing word," and they are engaged in the stupendous task of keeping a secret. They go through the piles of guesses and winnow out the correct guesses. This is somewhat monotonous work when there are but forty correct guesses out of 200,000. In yet another room eight clerks are employed sorting and counting money orders and arranging them for presentation at the postoffice to be cashed. One of the girls has a record of correctly tabulating 14,000 orders in an hour. Some $50,000 in money orders go through this mill every week, and half a dozen clerks are employed in "signing" them with rubber stamps.

The proprietor of the paper writes the sentence, and he alone knows the word until the competition is closed. He writes it on a paper, which, inclosed in a sealed envelope, is placed in charge of a public notary until the competition is closed. Lots of queer attempts are made to learn the word from him. Some have wanted to know how much a week he would want for disclosing the word. Many pitiful appeals reach him from people in sore straits, who want to know the word as a means of escape from their pecuniary troubles.

The public prosecutor has secured a summons against the proprietors of one paper using the device, and the case is to come up for trial this week. He claims that it is a gambling scheme because no skill is involved in finding the missing word. Bill Smith might be anything, and guessing, not skill, is involved in hitting the word which tells what the proprietor of the paper thinks he is. The proprietor of the paper leading in the movement says he has the opinions of two most distinguished counsel that the scheme is not a lottery nor a gambling device. Meanwhile the craze is slowly eating up the energy and life of the people, and what the end will be no man can prophesy. For the sake of this Nation's prosperity and sanity, however, something should be done to prevent its alighting on these shores, and, if Dr. Jenkins cannot cope with it, a kindly Providence might fittingly be appealed to.

Simplicity of Living.

Christian Advocate.

It may be that times have changed, and that the manner of life could never be reduced to the simplicity of earlier times, but that is no reason why it may not be much more simple and inexpensive than it is. When it is, the temptation to extravagance, that bane of social life in all ranks and in all countries, will be reduced to a minimum; and moderate incomes, the inevitable lot of the great majority, will be ample for all reasonable wants.

When Live Women Are In It.

Philadelphia Record.

Dress reform is becoming a live issue.

THE WIFE OF GEORGE GOULD

How Edith Kingdon Met and Captivated the Son of the Money Magnate.

Starting from a Brooklyn Theatrical Club, She Became a Good Actress and Won the Richest Marriageable Man in America.

Special Correspondence of the Sunday Journal.

NEW YORK, Dec. 23.—Some fourteen years ago there was a little, low, ramshackle wooden building in Tompkins avenue, Brooklyn. Externally it looked like a stable, inside it resembled a small country meeting-house. Tompkins avenue at that time was not more aristocratic than its name, but the stable-like structure was erected in its least pretentious portion. One end of the thoroughfare was marked on either side by the modest residences of clerks and shopkeepers. From this semi-conservativism the street dwindled into vacant lots, an occasional grocery or notion store, one lonely church and a number of cheap apartment houses. Just before it broke into Fulton street the avenue fell into irregularities. Here was a brick building with nondescript shops underneath and tenements above; there were certain old-fashioned cottages with sparse lawns and a general air of neglect; a drug store, with eminently respectable though gaudy lights, frowned on a beer saloon on one side and a blacksmith-shop on the other. It was not an inviting neighborhood, and the ramshackle building which stood far back from the street on a weedy patch of ground gave the impression of having been built there to prevent squatters from putting shanties on the vacant site. Surely, of all places the least likely for romance, of all places the most squalid, vulgar and depressing. Yet in this spot one of the most beautiful young women of America discovered a talent that subsequently led her into renown and prosperity beyond precedent.

Brooklyn, which is generally termed the City of Churches, deserves also to be called the home of amateur actors. Every young lady in that city thinks she can act, every young man knows he can. Society in Brooklyn is not composed of men and women, but of incipient Romeos and adolescent Juliets. The events of the year in that remarkable town are not the regularly ordained legal holidays, the Thanksgiving, Christmas or Fourth of July celebrations that are looked forward to in other quarters of the country. In Brooklyn the only matters of importance are the performances of the Amaranth, Kemble and Gilbert amateur societies. To be elected to these organizations means social recognition, to perform in them promises local fame. Without her amateur societies Brooklyn would possess only the Reverend Talmage and Greenwood to keep her from oblivion.

ORGANIZING A NEW SOCIETY.

At the period before noted the Kemble and Amaranth societies, being ancient and honorable with some half dozen years of existence, were conservative. They would not admit everybody. Their lines of exclusiveness were sharply drawn in membership, and to get on the stage was an impossibility save for the elect. No matter how much budding genius might knock at their doors they refused to open. In this predicament certain young men and women, who realized that the future renown of the American stage rested on the development of their talents, and despairing of admission to the older societies, resolved to found one of their own. They had plenty of ambition but little money. So they decided to gratify the one element by economizing the other. The costly Academy of Music and the scarcely less Atheneum were quite out of the question. In desperation one day they boarded a horse car to think over the problem of getting a place to act in. The horses became balky and stopped at Tompkins avenue. The embryonic Thespians got out to continue thinking on the sidewalk. They observed the ramshackle building and embraced one another fervently. They inquired the rent.

"If ye be honest meanin'," said the cautious landlord, "and won't have no gallivantin', nor runnin' agin the perlice, I'll make it cheap."

The committee proclaimed the excellence of their intentions, and the landlord made it cheap. A scrub-woman was engaged, a stage was built at one end of the narrow edifice and the Social Literary Union was born. This imposing title was presently considered too long. It was abbreviated into "Solitery Union," and under this name it gave several eminent players to the drama of America. The Solitery Union was a success from the start. The Heights people in Brooklyn have always surveyed their neighbors on the hill with aristocratic contempt, and the latter much-despised folks, rejoicing that an amateur dramatic society was now established among them, no longer pined to get into the Kemble and Amaranth, but went over, body, soul and boots, to the new organization. Thus encouraged the Solitery Union charged a small admission fee for expenses, put in a big stove to keep the hall warm, and began performances of Shakspeare and other authors, with extraordinary applause. In order to fulfill its office, the stove is kept very hot, the youth who attended it being especially chosen on account of an impediment of hearing and sight that kept him quite oblivious to the charms of the stage and steadily faithful to duty. So zealous were the efforts of this young person that nothing but a salamander could sit in the intolerable heat of the settees near the door. The great object of the Solitery Union audiences was to get as near the stage and as far away from the red-hot stove as possible.

Among the most frequent patrons of these performances was a young and very beautiful girl who always came with her mother, sat near the stage and enjoyed the acting in a keen though undemonstrative way. The chief players of the club were Robert Hilliard, who was considered very promising in sentiment, and Frank David, who was regarded with great esteem in comedy.

"Here," said Hilliard one day when they were meditating over a play for the regular monthly performance. "We want some pretty girls to dress up the stage. It's all very well for you and me to do the acting, but we want some pretty girls."

"All right," said the comedian; "I know one, and I'll ask her."

"Who's that!" asked the romantic amateur.

"Why, it's Miss Edith Kingdon. She generally sits in front."

"What!" cried Hilliard, "that glorious dark-eyed young lady? The very one. Go and ask her immediately."

HER FIRST ATTEMPT.

The comedian's errand was rewarded with success only after some difficulty. Miss Kingdon protested that she did not know anything about the stage, that she was entirely ignorant of acting, and that she would be dreadfully frightened to stand up before an audience. But Mr. David finally persuaded her to make the attempt, and after much hesitation she became an active member of the Solitery Union. Joining the club merely as a lovely ornament of the scenes, she speedily proved her ability to be trusted with a speaking part. Before the winter was over her talent was so manifest that she was elected by unanimous request to the Aristocratic Amaranth. In this new and more advantageous field her talent quickly developed and she was chosen for leading parts in almost all the performances. Her fame was widespread. It presently reached the ears of a professional manager. There was a tremendous sensation in Brooklyn when it was known that the beautiful and brilliant Edith Kingdon had decided to quit the amateur stage and join the ranks of the profession.

People who do not believe in luck find few arguments for the support of their theory in the career of Miss Kingdon. The fortuitous accident that first directed her steps to the amateur stage attended her movements on the professional boards. The young actress played many parts in several traveling companies from which she derived little money and less fame. After enduring all the vicissitudes of one-night stands the company of which she was a member arrived in Philadelphia to play a week's engagement. The Daly comedians happened to be in the Quaker City that week, and Augustin Daly, who frequently makes such excursions, visited the rival performance incognito. The audience was small, the play uninteresting and the acting generally bad. Miss Kingdon did her best with an ungrateful part, believing ruefully that the effort was wasted. But it was the most profitable bit of acting that ever was done on the American stage. Hidden within the shadow of one of the proscenium boxes a tall, slender man sat thoughtfully watching the performance. Next day Edith Kingdon was engaged for Daly's company in New York.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS.

Miss Kingdon's first appearance on a stage whose wings led to the altar was on Thursday night, Oct. 16, 1884. The play was "A Wooden Spoon," in which she performed the character of Mysia Jessamy. The audience examined the newcomer critically, but, beyond complimenting her extraordinary beauty, made no comment on her accession to the company. The Von Scouthan piece had a short run, unmarked by any particular event. It was followed, on Nov. 26, by the production of one of the greatest successes of Daly's theater. "Love on Crutches" was not only delightful in itself, but in its character of Mrs. Margery Gwynn it afforded a chance for the talent, as well as the beauty, of Edith Kingdon. As the charming young widow of this comedy the new actress made a phenomenal hit. Always a modest, unassuming young woman, she was quite unconscious of the success she had achieved, and, after the close of the second act, she hurried down stairs to her dressing-room to prepare for the next scene. The applause of the audience was tumultuous and long continued. In response to its bidding Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew came out and bowed. They were followed at a later interval by Mrs. Gilbert, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Skinner. The applause still continuing undiminished, the entire company, with the exception of one member, came out. Then Mr. Daly made his appearance before the curtain, and after him Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew once more emerged. Then the audience, believing that the young widow was deliberately kept in the background, broke into a small riot, and cries of "Kingdon! Kingdon!" rang through the house. The young actress was hastily sent for, but in response to the entreaties of the stage manager she declared her inability to come out, inasmuch as she was at that moment in a state of transition between one gown and another.

"Never mind that," he whispered anxiously through the keyhole. "You can throw a shawl over your shoulders. You must go out or there will be a riot."

Thus adjured, Miss Kingdon seized a lace wrap, drew it over her shoulders and ran upstairs. In her dishabille it was out of the question for her to appear before the audience. So she pulled an edge of the curtain aside, peeped out smilingly at the audience and blushingly nodded her thanks. Jay Gould and his son George sat in the proscenium box which they always occupied at Daly first nights. George Gould caught the twinkle of the pretty actress's eye and fell hopelessly in love. Next day the critics and public alike raved over the talent and beauty of Edith Kingdon in the new comedy. But the sentiment she had aroused in the bosom of the dark young man was worth more to her than the applause of a nation.

The business manager of Daly's was an old gentleman who had more enemies and good qualities than almost any other man in the profession. Mr. John Duff was the terror of dead-heads, the stern guardian of a theater for which everybody wanted and few obtained privileges. A very honest and kindly old gentleman at heart, Mr. Duff preserved an exterior of continual menace to dudes, stage-door mashers and the army of people who wished to pass the gatekeeper without a preliminary interview at the box-office.

"Certainly, my dear boy," he would occasionally say with grim sarcasm, "come right in and you shall have the best seat in the house—my favorite chair—as a special favor. I will let you sit in it to-night."

YOUNG GOULD'S COURTSHIP.

Whereupon he would take the unsuspecting beggar and plant him in a last-row seat with a draught on his back. But John Duff's bete noir was the stage-masher. Daly's Theater always had pretty actresses, and the desire to be acquainted with Miss Rehan and her comely companions was universal with the young gentlemen of Delmonico's and the Calumet Club. With John Duff at the front door and a stalwart Irishman named Owen, attended by a ferocious bull-dog, at the stage entrance, there was no hope, however, for gallants. But George Gould was on friendly terms with the old business manager, and he made the request for an introduction without hesitation.

"Look here," said John Duff, slowly, "Miss Kingdon is a lady, and so long as I have anything to say in the matter she must be treated with respect. If you want to meet her under those conditions, I guess it can be managed."

Mr. Gould hastened to reassure the manager, and an introduction was effected. The courtship was swift and silent. One morning the match-making mammas of America were horrified to learn that the wealthiest young man in the country was married to an actress. The Ward McAllister legions shook their heads ruefully and declared that the youthful millionaire should have secured his social position by marrying into one of the old families. But George Gould married the girl he loved, and nobody has ever been able to say that Edith Kingdon did not make a wife as good as she is beautiful. She was a tremendous favorite with Jay Gould, who used to accompany the happy pair to first nights at Daly's, and after the play was over the great financier was generally taken behind the scenes by his pretty daughter-in-law, where he enjoyed a chat with Mr. Daly, Miss Rehan and Mrs. Gilbert. Mrs. Edith Kingdon-Gould owns a box at the opera in which last season she sat resplendent in beauty and diamonds worth a king's ransom. By a curious coincidence at that time Frank David, by whose kindly offices she first went on the stage, was playing farce-comedy at a cheap theater a few doors below the Metropolitan Opera-house in which his protege was the admiration of our sex and the envy of her own. The whirligig of fortune was further illustrated by the fact that the farce was a failure, and the poor comedian did not get the salary he well earned by making grotesque faces and turning flip-flaps. At another cheap theater down town Mr. Robert Hilliard, the once famous star of the Solitery Union, when Edith Kingdon joined its force of walking ladies, was nightly being held before the saw in "Blue Jeans." When the young actress determined to quit the amateur for the professional stage, Frank David, Bob Hilliard and many other amateur players of Brooklyn gave a supper in her honor. In proposing the health of their guest, Bob Hilliard ended his speech by turning to the young lady and saying: "Now, Edith, I hope that since you are going to leave the Amaranth and go on the regular stage you won't fall in love with some poor creature of an actor and spoil your future by marrying him."

Miss Kingdon's response was characteristic. She simply rose and said emphatically: "Mr. Hilliard, ladies and gentlemen, I won't." And she didn't.

HILLARY BELL.

She Might Have Known.

Judge.

Lady of the House—Poor soul! Your husband's death was very unexpected, wasn't it?

The Washwoman—Lawb bless you, no! Why, free days 'fore he died I made him some stewed chicken an' he wouldn't hab it, an' I knowed when he didn't want no chicken he was a goner.

Away Up.

New York Commercial Advertiser.

The "tallest thing" at the world' fair will be a fir stick that came all the way from Puget sound. The highest thing promises to be the price of board.

THE BOULEVARDS OF PARIS

The Great Thoroughfares That Mirror the Life of the Gay French Capital.

They Present Not Only the City's Characteristics, but Abound in Historic Interest—Ingenuity of the Shop-Keepers.

Special Correspondence of the Sunday Journal.

PARIS, Dec. 7.—Parisian life, as seen on the great boulevards, has often been described, but the subject has lost none of its fascination for either the visitor or the reader, and as no two visitors look at the scene from precisely the same stand-point, or are impressed by just the same things, there is still a chance for one who shall sketch this scene from personal observation to make his pictures both original and interesting. By the great boulevards we mean the streets bearing that name, which were constructed under Louis XIV, and which extend in almost a complete circle around what was formerly the city, their site having originally been the location of the city ramparts, or fortifications. Outside of these there is another circle of boulevards, and this circle marks the site of the ramparts of Paris after they had been extended so as to embrace the former suburbs, or Faubourgs. Still further out, beyond the Communes, and at the extreme limits of what is the Paris of to-day, are those boulevards, so called, which form a sort of military road for the massing of troops and the manning and victualing of the mammoth defenses by which the Paris of the future hopes to protect itself, more effectually than it did twenty-one years ago, against any possible incursion of the armies of Kaiser William. Thus, the city has an abundance of boulevards, and one is tempted to remark, apropos of the derivation of this name from bulwarks, that if all these great thoroughfares furnished as many evidences of the things which conduce to national strength as they do of the prevailing passion for adornment this wonderful city would be well fortified indeed, both against external foes and against the more subtle and dangerous forces which menace her from within.

Chief among the great boulevards are those which bear the names of Madeleine, Capucines, Italiens, Montmartre, Poissonnier, Bonne-Nouvelle and St. Denis. An afternoon's saunter along these thoroughfares, keeping the eyes open and the reflective faculties busy en route, will reveal to you very much that is characteristic of this gay city. You will get in such a walk a good view of Parisian life, will pass or be within sight of many places of commanding interest, and will be reminded repeatedly of the checkered and sanguinary history the city has had. Almost everything in Paris speaks of change and violence, and this idea is made strikingly prominent in our walk on the great boulevards. We start at the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, the Madeleine. It was intended originally to be what it now is, a place of worship, but Bonaparte converted it into a temple of glory. Begun in 1777, it was retarded in its erection by two revolutions (1792 and 1830), and was not finally finished until 1842. Here is a reminder both of the vicissitudes of the nation and of the vacillating attitude of the national government toward religion.

TWO SUGGESTIVE PILES.

This is at the beginning of our walk, and at the other end, within a few hundred yards of each other, are two grim-looking piles which are similarly suggestive, and in their modern history even more so. These are the Portes St. Denis and St. Martin, erected by the city in honor of the victories of the grand monarch. In 1814 after the first overthrow of Napoleon the allied armies entered the city by the Porte St. Martin; a fearful desecration, and it marked a great change but it was a scene of peace and quite an affair of honor in comparison with the scenes these two portes witnessed during the ravages of the last Commune. The Place de l'Opera marks the site of another great change, and one, happily, which it is a pleasure to recall. When you stand in this place, which has no less than six broad thoroughfares diverging from it, and remember that from the ground now left vacant for convenience and pleasure, some five hundred houses had to be removed at almost untold cost, you get a practical object lesson of what Parisian enterprise means; and when you look at the Grand Opera-house itself, which covers three acres, and which cost nearly $10,000,000, your conception of what has been done to make Paris the most beautiful city in the world is enlarged still further.

Even here, though, spite of the beauty and enterprise about you, it is impossible to lose sight of that which has been horrible in this city's history, or to divest yourself entirely of fear for her future. At the other end of the grand Rue de la Paix the column Vendome rises to your view, looking as though it had stood there undisturbed for a hundred years. Yet in 1871 the flurry of a Parisian mob had leveled it to the ground; and not far beyond is the site of the Tuileries, to which Parisian madmen applied at the same time the torch of the incendiary. Even the paving of these great streets has its story of foreboding to tell. It is no longer of stone, because so often stones have been used for barricades and weapons of assault, but of wood, and in the smallest blocks, the peculiar rumbling of the traffic over it, which reminds you at first of the rumbling sound peculiar to the ocean, seeming in consequence like a never ceasing admonition at once of what has been and of what may be.

THE PEOPLE YOU MEET.

But the shops you see on these boulevards give no sign of anything like this, and the throngs of people you meet are surely, for the greater part, living neither in the past nor the future, but in the gay and all engrossing present. You detect no fear in the air, but you do often detect in it the real or artificial fragrance of flowers. This is distinctly Parisian. We never noticed it to any extent in New York or in London, but we pass shop after shop in Paris which sends out a delightful fragrance to us, and occasionally a creature in silks and ribbons will sweep past, so bountifully endued with perfume as to infect the air with sweetness for yards behind her. If it were only possible as these Parisian ladies pass by, leaving such delightful reminders in their wake, to dismiss from your mind the old saying, that where odors of this kind are used so freely you may suspect the presence of others which it is desirable to conceal, one could not only be thankful to these fragrant creatures, but might almost be in danger of admiring them.

What the feminine complexion is like in Paris one can hardly say from a walk on the boulevards. The furtive glances we have ventured to cast upon it have left the impression that you see it in public under a mask. But the mask is exceedingly pretty as a work of art. Those who have seen this complexion at early breakfast say that the mask, so generally and so skillfully put on later in the day, is more attractive than the face itself would be. Perhaps it is, but to give these Parisian ladies their due, it must be added that their faces are well formed, that most of them are blessed with the loveliest eyes, and that they maintain, altogether, a very pleasing and even striking expression. In the latter characteristic the proud dames of old England look dull and insipid in comparison with their fair sisters of sunny France, and we are not sure that the Parisian beauty is fully equaled in this one point of wearing habitually a gentle and pleasing expression by even the best types among our own country women.

BEAUTIFUL HOUSEHOLD GOODS.

But we are digressing to talk of the ladies, not at all an uncommon weakness in Paris, especially with men who spend much time on the great boulevards. But in our